



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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02 July 2009

CHN103133.E

China: Whether the Public Security Bureau (PSB) has set up a national computer network for information sharing; nature and extent of communication between PSB offices across the country; whether a link to a police computer network is available at international airports in China (2006 - May 2009)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

In 17 June 2009 correspondence with the Research Directorate, a counselor at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Ottawa provided the following information on Public Security Bureau (PSB) information sharing:

1. The national computer network of policing is called the Golden Shield Project.
2. The aim of the project is to improve policing. Non-policing information and information from other departments, such as family planning information, is not stored in the project. There are strict regulations on how to use the data in the project.
3. The Project has eight databases:
 - (1). Population information, mainly the information on the citizen ID;
 - (2). Criminal record information;
 - (3). Criminal fugitive information;
 - (4). Information on stolen and robbed cars;
 - (5). Information on passports and exit and entry;
 - (6). Information on registered cars and drivers;
 - (7). Information on police officers;
 - (8). Information on key fire-prevention units.
4. Now all police departments at county level and above (namely police departments at provincial, city and county levels) and most police stations and other grass-roots units (namely police under the county level) can connect to the system. Some small police stations and grass-roots units in remote areas can not connect to the system.
5. The system used by PSB in Beijing is the same national system. It is part of the national system.
6. Chinese police are in charge of exit and entry administration. Just like CBSA [Canada Border Services Agency], in all ports of entry including international airports there are police units in charge of examination and they can connect to the system.

The Chinese Ministry of Public Security website indicates that on 16 November 2006 the Golden Shield project passed a quality examination (n.d.). The Golden Shield has three levels of telecommunication networks that host public security information (China n.d.). The Ministry website also states that grassroots-level police stations and squads have a 90 percent connection rate to main telecommunication networks (ibid.). For every 100 police officers, there are 47 computers connected with these networks (ibid.). A November 2008 Radio Free Asia article indicates that policing authorities spent three years (2003 - 2006) completing the Golden Shield project, with over 50 percent of policing agencies gaining access to the Internet (24 Nov. 2008). The Embassy Counselor stated that the Golden Shield is not used to track an individual who is not a criminal suspect according to Chinese criminal law (1 June 2009).

According to a 13 April 2006 article from the New York-based *Epoch Times*, an official from the Ministry of Public Security indicated that the objective of the Golden Shield project is to "facilitate the transmission and sharing of data among police so as to enhance the capability of the police to solve cases." The article also describes the Golden Shield as a "digital system for information management within the Public Security Ministry," with 640,000 network computers that are "grouped into 23 operating systems," which contain population, crime, vehicle registration and border control information (*The Epoch Times* 13 Apr. 2006).

A researcher, who has conducted research and published on the Chinese policing system for fifteen years and who was previously a professor of Chinese and East Asian Politics at Western Michigan University, stated the following in correspondence with the Research Directorate:

China's Public Security Departments absolutely do have nationwide computer information sharing networks, and have been working hard to develop and expand those for at least a decade.... [A] fair amount is published about them in Chinese language police journals. One does read complaints about provincial police departments not being willing to share information with each other, however. For Chinese readers, a good deal of information about nationwide arrest warrants is openly available on the webpage of the Ministry of Public Security (www.mps.gov.cn) and on the webpages of the various provincial public security departments. There has really been an explosion of this online police information in the past 6-7 years. (11 May 2009)

In a follow-up interview, the Researcher reiterated that obstacles to information sharing amongst PSB offices is less a technical challenge than a challenge of getting local officials to share information (21 May 2009). The Researcher also noted that China's policing system is not highly centralized, but rather very decentralized (21 May 2009). This information could not be corroborated among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In an open letter to the United States (US) Department of Commerce, the Executive Director of the Laogai Research Foundation describes China's Golden Shield project in the following way:

This project includes monitoring and censoring the Internet, including individuals' emails. It also includes monitoring phone conversations with advanced speech recognition technology, and monitoring citizens' movement through a vast network of surveillance cameras, equipped with face recognition technology.... The ultimate goal is for police to use "Smartcard" technology to scan an individual's state-issued identity card and gain instant access to all of the information the government has collected on this individual. (16 June 2009)

New Delhi-based *Daily News and Analysis* (DNA) similarly notes that China's Golden Shield project employs the use of surveillance cameras, as well as face and speech recognition technology (17 Sept. 2008). The DNA article also corroborates that the Golden Shield involves monitoring Internet use (17 Sept. 2008). According to the *Epoch Times* article, an official from the Ministry of Public Security stated that "the Golden Shield is an internal network within public security services that is totally separate from the Internet that ordinary citizens use" (13 Apr. 2006). However, another source in the article suggested that Beijing's official source was not disclosing all the functions of the project (*The Epoch Times* 13 Apr. 2006).

Several additional sources indicate that the Golden Shield project includes monitoring civilian Internet use (ZDNet.co.uk 1 June 2006; Radio Free Asia 24 Nov. 2008; *Wired Magazine* 27 Oct. 2007; *PC Magazine* 6 June 2008). For instance, a ZDNet.co.uk article indicates that Internet filtering, which blocks access to certain IP addresses and domain names, takes place in China (1 June 2006). An article in *Wired Magazine* reports that the Golden Shield project is designed to "monitor, filter, and block online sensitive content" (23 Oct. 2007). Internet traffic is verified against a "blacklist of tens of thousands of Internet addresses" (*Wired Magazine* 23 Oct. 2007). This technology is said to be supplemented by employees of the PSB who monitor the media, "erasing and editing" politically sensitive material, as well as shutting down blogs "in the most egregious cases"

(ibid.). According to *PC Magazine*, approximately 30,000 government employees monitor the Internet in China (6 June 2008). Additionally, *Wired Magazine* indicates that "watchlists of potentially suspicious emailers" are maintained, with PSB employees notifying investigators of anti-state activity (23 Oct. 2007). Reporters Without Borders indicates that 49 "cyber dissidents" are imprisoned in China, 9 of those since 2006 (2009).

Amnesty International (AI) broadly describes the Golden Shield as a project that aims "to develop an online database with an all-encompassing surveillance network which would allow the authorities immediate access to records on every citizen in China" (July 2006, 30). *Legal Affairs* magazine similarly notes that the Golden Shield project is designed to create "instantaneous access to a database that contains the work records, financial data, and law-enforcement histories of almost every adult Chinese citizen" (Jan-Feb. 2006). Both *Legal Affairs* and AI indicate that "Policenet" is part of the Golden Shield project and operates in all but one province (*Legal Affairs* Jan-Feb. 2006; AI July 2006, 26). Through this system, local branches are connected to each other, as well as to PSB citizen records (*Legal Affairs* Jan-Feb. 2006).

According to a Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) interview with an author who has been critical of US corporate involvement in technology development in China (n.d.), Policenet also allows police officers to access the online search history and e-mail of citizens for the previous 60 days once their ID cards are scanned in a handheld device (ibid. 7 Feb. 2006). This information could not be corroborated among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

An 11 February 2009 Datamonitor article indicates that the Ministry of Public Security chose China Information Security Technology (CIST) to deliver police-use geographic information systems (PGIS) nationally. PGIS is said to offer increased coordination and monitoring amongst the mobile police workforce, allowing the command centre to see and communicate with ground-level police (Datamonitor 11 Feb. 2009). The article states that this national PGIS initiative is part of phase two of the Golden Shield project and aims to "establish an integrated platform connecting all variations of PGIS systems throughout the country" in order to share information across various public service departments and police divisions (ibid.). It is estimated that 100 provincial-level cities and municipalities will have standardized and integrated PGIS systems in three years, after which these systems will be implemented nationwide (ibid.).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: The China Association of Science and Technology (CAST), the Embassy of Canada in Beijing, Rights and Democracy, Human Rights in China (HRIC), the Diu Hua Foundation, the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) and a professor did not respond within the time constraints of this Response. Three additional professors and a representative at the Beijing Capital International Airport did not have information on this subject. Attempts to contact the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau and the Aviation Traffic Management Bureau (ATMB) in China were unsuccessful.

Internet sites, including: Airport International, Airport-technology.com, Beijing Capital International Airport, China Association of Science and Technology (CAST), China Criminal Police University, Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), *The China Daily* [Beijing], Diu Hua Foundation, *The Economic Observer* [Beijing], European Country of Origin Information Networks (ecoi.net), *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Human Rights in China (HRIC), Human Rights Watch (HRW), *Jane's Terrorism and Security Monitor*, Rights and Democracy, United Kingdom (UK) Border Agency, United States (US) Department of State, Xinhua News Agency.

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